

Nikoles Aleshi Virtuana Language Collection

The Virtuana Language was invented by immigrant Nikoles Aleshi while living in Kansas City in the early 20th century. This collection helps to document his life and the phonetic language he felt should replace the English language in America.

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Nikoles Aleshi
Title: Nikoles Aleshi Virtuana Language collection
Dates: 1906-1977
Size: 3 boxes
Location: SC27

Administrative information

Restrictions on access: Unrestricted access.

Additional physical form available: Collection photographs have been digitized.

Related collections in other repositories: Nikoles Aleshi papers (C3828), Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Columbia.

Acquisition information: Gift, 1971, Cisetti Family (Aleshi related)

Citation note: Nikoles Aleshi Virtuana Language collection (SC27), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

Collection Description

Biographical/Historical note

Nicholas Alesci was born on January 24, 1863, in Sicily/Italy, the youngest of five children. In the early 1880s he immigrated to the United States landing in New Orleans where he first worked. He later moved to Kansas City around the turn of the century. On October 8, 1894, he married Josephine Asta and they had eight children. He owned a dairy at 66th and Belinder and a grocery store at 312 Holmes and was one of the first men in Kansas City to have a milk route and to deliver milk house-to-house.

Around 1906 he conceived the idea of a new spelling system for the United States because he found the spelling system in this country illogical. He changed the spelling of his name to Nikoles Aleshi. He established his own spelling and language system, Virtuana, based on phonetics. He changed the name of Kansas City to Fontolina, as he envisioned Kansas City as the "fountain" from which his Virtuana language would flow. Throughout the rest of his life he promoted, at his own expense, his idea of a national language. Mr. Aleshi died on January 31, 1931 and is buried in St. Mary's Cemetery in Kansas City, Missouri.

Scope and content note

This collection is contained in two legal size document boxes and three large folio volumes noted as Volume 1 (2 copies) and Volume 6. It contains original manuscripts, early newspaper clippings, reports, business accounts, correspondence, photographs, calendars, ephemera, etc. Included in this collection are a family history notebook, official publications, calendars, business cards, etc., using the Virtuana language. Also included are lesson plans and maps as well as reports from the Bureau of Education Spelling Reform. Photographs are mainly of Aleshi as well as examples of the language.

Collection Inventory

Box 1

Folder 1

- Photograph #1 - Portrait of Nickoles Aleshi, n.d., 10011898
- Photograph #2 - Interior of store at 312 Holmes, 1908, 10011908
- Photograph #3 - Exterior view, store at 312 Holmes and milk delivery cart, 1909, 10000133
- Photograph #4 - Exterior view of delivery wagon beside store, Italy Dairy Company, 1909, 10011909
- Photograph #5 - Exterior view of store at 312 Holmes with children in front, 1909, 10011910

Folder 2

- Photograph #6 - Interior, men grouped at table with Aleshi studying language system, ca1911, 10011911
- Photograph #7 - Portrait of Mr. Aleshi, 1912, 10011912
- Photograph #8 - Interior classroom scene with Virtuana alphabet on blackboard, n.d., 10011913
- Photograph #9 - Exterior of store at 312 Holmes where Virtuana language began, n.d., 10011914, N232-412
- Photograph #10 - Interior view of unidentified woman and dog, n.d., 10011915
- Photograph #11 - Similar to #10, n.d., 10011916

Folder 3

- Booklet (2 c.) entitled *The Spelling Reform* by Francis A. March, Bureau of Education, Circular of Information No. 8, 1893 and booklet entitled *The Work of the Bureau of Education, Chapter 1*, advance sheets, 1908

Folder 4

- Ledger book containing business accounts of Nikoles Aleshi, 1908-1909, 174 pages

Folder 5

- Simplified Spelling Board, Circular No. 23, March 6, 1909; Circular No. 16, November 28, 1907; Special Circular, June 26, 1909 and one copy of *Simplified Spelling Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 1, June, 1909

Folder 6

- Correspondence, 1906 - 1910, to and from Aleshi

Folder 7

- Correspondence, 1911 - 1925, to and from Aleshi including copyright application

Folder 8

- Certificate of Premium for Frances Aleshi with chart of Virtuland, June 14, 1911, plus photocopies

Folder 9

- Ledger Book - Divided by states, appears to be a record of where information was sent concerning the language system, 1909-1915

Box 2**Folder 1**

- I Manuskript, Nashional Proprieti, The First Relashin of the Virtuana Lengueje", written 1904-06 by Nikoles Aleshi. Handwritten, 68 pages with an explanation by the author. Includes photocopies of items.

Folder 2

- V. Manuskript, Nashional Proprieti, Virtuana Orthografia, typewritten, 76 pages in 3 ring ledger book binder

Folder 3

- IV. Manuskript, Nashional Proprieti, The Third Manuscript of the Virtuana Sistem, 268 page ledger book with alphabetical tabs. Many pages left blank.

Folder 4

- Two circulars - *The Teble of the Amerikan Skripture For the Publik Skuls of Amerika* and *The Niu Spelling Eksperiment Sirkular*.

Folder 5

- II. Manuskript, Nashional Proprieti, The Teble of the Skripture of Amerika For the Publik Skools of Amerika, typewritten, 32 pages; printed forms including names and addresses of people wanting copies of this publication; two publications entitled *Nashinal Teble of the Unitet States Lengueje* and *The Universal Edukator*.

Folder 6

- Newspaper clippings, photocopied, 1908 - 1977

Folder 7

- Notebook assembled by family, all material pertaining to Aleshi and including photocopies and photographs, much of the material in original form in rest of collection

Folder 8

- Printed official reports, 1909-10; pamphlet entitled *The Kansas City Souvenir or the Fontolina Souvenir*, 1926

Folder 9

- Photocopy of publication entitled *The Niu Sistem and the Old Standard Speling*, n.d., 4 pages

Folder 10

- Miscellaneous items including 1924 circular and receipt form

Folio Book - Volume I - 2 copies -Title cover reads *Virtuana Lenjueje Ensiklopedia*, covers 1907-1915 and contains calendars for 1911, 1913, 1914; language publications, letterheads and envelopes, official reports, newspaper clippings, charts, postcard, correspondence, pamphlets, forms and other examples of the Virtuana Language in use.

Folio Book - Volume VI - Title cover reads *Manuskript* and covers 1909-1910, contains handwritten pages, newspaper clippings, correspondence including to state officials, official reports, post card, pictures, maps of states, brochures, and other examples of the Virtuana Language in use.

Processed by Special Collections Manager Gloria Maxwell and Special Collections Assistant Kathryn Maciel, 1992; further processing by Special Collections Librarian Sara Nyman, 2004.